



**FAMILIES AFIELD:**

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OPENING THE DOOR TO THE NEXT GENERATION  
OF AMERICAN HUNTERS

**Prepared By:**  
The U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance  
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## **Families Afield**

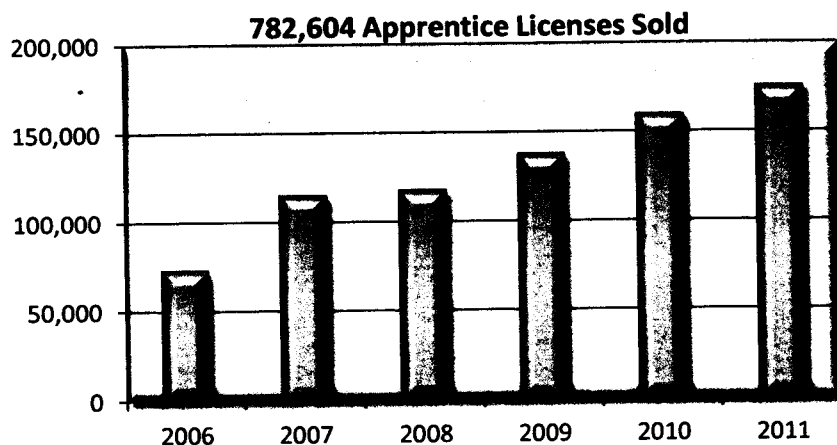
Over the past 30 years, the number of American hunters has been on a steady decline. This means less money for vital wildlife management programs and fewer mentors to pass along our hunting heritage. In addition, our community is growing older – which means we're running short on time to recruit and retain the next generation of American hunters.

The Families Afield program was established by the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance, the National Shooting Sports Foundation, and the National Wild Turkey Federation in 2005 in an effort to reduce and remove unnecessary barriers that impede the next generation of sportsmen and women from joining our ranks. Along with the National Rifle Association and the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, Families Afield legislation has been passed in 34 states resulting in more than 782,604 apprentice licenses being sold.

### **Apprentice Licenses:**

The hallmark of the Families Afield program is the apprentice hunting license (also called "mentored" hunting). The creation of an apprentice hunting license allows a new hunter to safely try hunting under the watchful eye of an experienced adult mentor before completing a hunter education class. Mentors instill safety, ethics, and their passion for the sport in new hunters in a safe setting, while allowing the newcomer the thrill of the hunt.

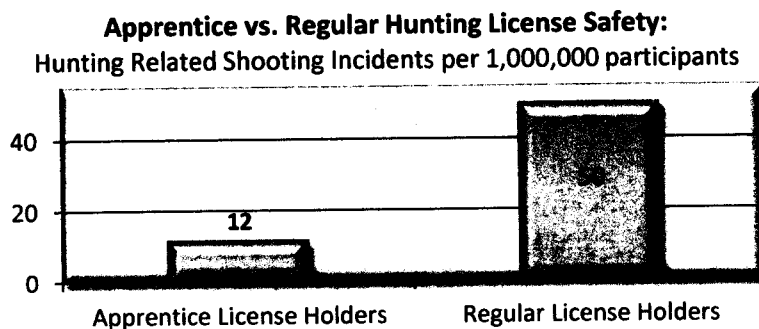
### **Apprentice Hunting Creates New Hunters:**



\* Apprentice Hunting Licenses Buyer Survey data compiled by Mile Creek Communications.

### **Apprentice Hunting Is Safe:**

The safest hunter in the woods is the supervised youth hunter. In fact, Apprentice hunting has been shown to be more than 4 times safer than the general hunting population.



\* Apprentice Hunting Licenses Survey compiled by Mile Creek Communications.

### **Apprentice Hunting Retains New Hunters:**

Data from Ohio's Apprentice Hunting program shows that roughly half (47-52%) of all apprentice license buyers will be retained as hunting license buyers. This mirrors data from the Pennsylvania Game Commission that shows a 55% retention rate for their "mentored youth" program. With a 50% retention rate, Families Afield is not only one of the most successful recruitment programs available, it's also one of the most effective *retention* programs available to state wildlife agencies today.

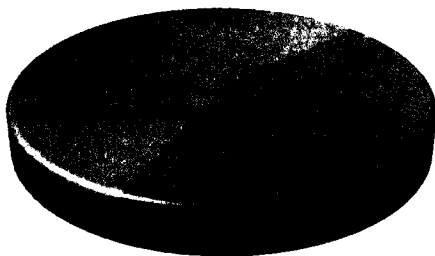
### **Opponents say Families Afield Circumvents Hunter Education:**

This couldn't be further from the truth. Instead, Apprentice hunting allows new hunters to *try* hunting before spending countless hours in a hunter education class. This "try-before-you-buy" concept allows mentors to instill safety, ethics, and their passion for the sport in new hunters in a safe setting while they get to experience the thrill of the hunt. *It's important to note that a component of each Families Afield bill is the requirement that prior to becoming a fully licensed hunter a newcomer must pass hunter education.*

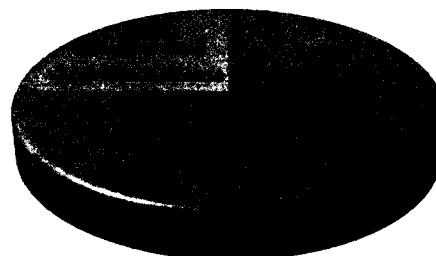
Additionally, research from the Ohio Division of Wildlife shows that once Apprentice hunters are hooked, they voluntarily transition to becoming a fully licensed hunter by taking Hunter Education before it's required by law.

#### **What Happens to Apprentice License buyers in Years 2 & 3?**

In Year 2



In Year 3



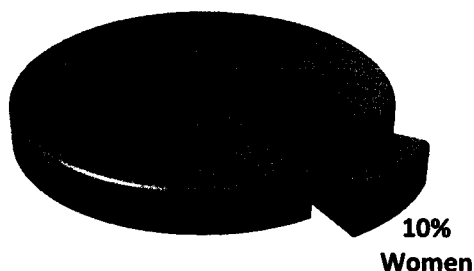
Data Compiled by: Ohio Division of Wildlife

In year two, nearly 1/2 of repeat license buyers (44%) took Hunter Ed when they could have continued to hunt on an apprentice license for two additional years. By year three, it jumps to 75%. This data demonstrates that Apprentice hunters are giving up the remaining years of eligibility for Apprentice licenses and transitioning to Hunter Education and regular hunting licenses.

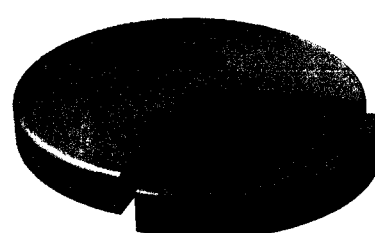
### **Successfully Recruiting Women and Urban Hunters:**

Data from Minnesota details the success Families Afield has had in recruiting non-traditional hunters – women and urban newcomers. In that study, nearly 30% of apprentice license buyers were women, a rate 3x greater than the general hunting population. Additionally, the data showed that 42% of apprentice license buyers came from urban locations compared to just 28% of the general hunting population.

Regular Hunting  
Population



Apprentice Hunting  
Population



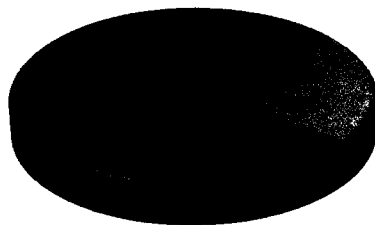
Data Compiled by: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

### **Apprentice Hunting Isn't Needed – These Individuals Would Hunt Anyways:**

Yes, while it is true that some individuals would end up hunting without an Apprentice hunting licenses, the vast majority would not. Research from Minnesota makes it clear that without Apprentice hunting to help recruit new hunters, those individuals would have not hunted.

In fact, only 24% of Apprentice Hunters responded they would have hunted without the Apprentice license.

**Would you have hunted if the Apprentice Program did not exist?**



*Source: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Apprentice Hunter Validation Survey*

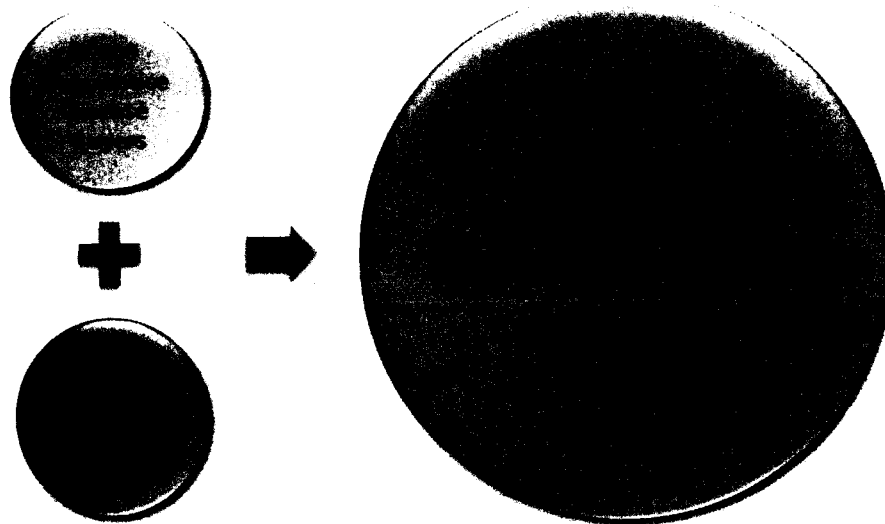
### **Financial Impact of Families Afield**

With more than 782,604 new hunters, not only has Families Afield proven to be a safe and successful recruitment and retention tool, it packs a significant economic punch as well.

Research conducted by the National Shooting Sports Foundation in 2008, shows that the average hunter spends roughly \$2,000 per year on expenses related to hunting. This includes food, lodging, equipment, travel costs, licenses and more.

When combined with the Apprentice License Buyer retention data from Ohio, it is easy to appreciate the impact of the program. Families Afield has already produced an estimated economic impact just over three-quarters of a billion dollars – 782 Million per year! (And that number continues to grow as more states adopt the program.)

**What Kind of Economic Impact Will Apprentice Hunting Have on My State?**



**About the Families Afield Program:**

Families Afield was established by the *U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance*, the *National Shooting Sports Foundation*, and the *National Wild Turkey Federation* in 2004 in an effort to reduce and remove unnecessary barriers that impede the next generation of sportsmen and women from joining our ranks. Along with the *National Rifle Association* and the *Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation*, Families Afield legislation has been passed in 34 states resulting in more than 782,604 apprentice licenses being sold.

In Montana, the Families Afield coalition has been joined by:

*Montana Chapters of Safari Club International*

*Montana Outfitters and Guides Association*

*Montana Sportsmen for Fish Wildlife*

*Montana State Chapter of Ducks Unlimited*

*National Wild Turkey Federation - Montana State Chapter*

*Mule Deer Foundation*